

COMMUNICATING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ONLINE.
A CASE STUDY: FĂGĂRAȘ COUNTRY'S TOWN HALL OFFICIAL WEBSITES

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ABSTRACT

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) represents an important resource for both strengthening community identities and sustainable community development. In the last decades, the Internet has become a fundamental means of promoting ICH. The objective of our research was to find out what was it that the local authorities have chosen to promote on their websites in relation with local ICH in Făgăraș Country, Romania. Based on a content analysis, we identified and quantified all the data related to ICH on the administrative sites of 16 town halls in the area. We also compared the online data with those discovered in a previous field research in which we had inventoried the ICH local resources. Our results show that online communication about ICH lacks a coherent strategy, reflecting both poor knowledge of international policies on the intangible cultural heritage at the level of local administrations and an insufficient use of the wealth of local cultural resources in their online communication on their official websites.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage, online communication, official websites, Făgăraș Country.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is nowadays considered a fundamental resource for the sustainable development of human communities. Investments in preserving and promoting cultural heritage can yield many benefits for both countries and

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communities: economic (reducing poverty, higher employment rate, higher revenue from cultural industries and service industries, higher foreign exchange earnings) and non-economic ones (education, strengthening of identity, cohesion, inclusion, social capital and sustainability) (Cernea, 2001; UNESCO, 2015).

The links between culture, heritage, development and tourism represent an important topic in recent research. Shipley and Snyder (2013) argue that heritage is a fundamental component in shaping community identity, defining values and establishing development strategic lines. Piñeiro-Naval and Serra (2019) asserted that “heritage conservation and exploitation meet several objectives, not only related to tourism. People who reside in territories that possess this type of heritage recognize themselves in it through a narrative that is consistent with group identity consciousness and are able to make use of heritage not only for the purposes of economic exploitation, but also for their own cultural enrichment” (p. 3).

A special place in contemporary cultural policies is held by the *intangible cultural heritage* (ICH), which includes “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants” (UNESCO, *What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?*). In the context of globalization and competition on the international economic market, national and local administrations have begun, in recent decades, to use their intangible cultural heritage to differentiate themselves from competitors, producing “symbolic identities” or “cultural attributes” which can be “configured into a kind of narrative that some authors have called Authorized Heritage Discourse” (Piñeiro-Naval, Serra, 2019:4), hence the need of cultural branding.

In such a context, the Internet has become a fundamental means of promoting the elements of local ICH. The online communication about ICH on administrative websites is also in line with both the New Public Management and the Democratic Governance model (Rădulescu, Hudea, Papuc, 2018), which are the theoretical perspectives describing the new forms of interaction between public institutions and citizens, based on dialogue, participation and transparency.

Starting from these theoretical premises, the main objective of our research was to find out what was it that local authorities have chosen to promote on their websites in relation with the local ICH resources in Făgăraș Country, Romania, an area with a specific historical and cultural identity. For achieving this goal, we first conducted a content analysis by which we identified and quantified all the data related to ICH on the administrative sites of 16 town halls in the area. We then compared the online data with those discovered during an earlier field research, in which we had inventoried the ICH resources of local communities from Făgăraș Country.

Our article is structured as follows: first, we present some recent approaches to culture-based development and the need to preserve cultural heritage; second, we integrate this discussion in a broader context of the contemporary society based on technology and digitalization; third, we briefly discuss the context in which we

conducted the research presented in this paper; fourth, we indicate how we conducted the content analysis on administrative websites and what our main results were; finally, we discuss our results in relation to both the literature and the findings of our previous research on local ICH resources.

2. CULTURE-LED DEVELOPMENT AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

In recent decades, the culture-development paradigm (Cobianu-Băcanu, 2001) has become more prominent in development policies. This paradigm has been supported since the 1980s by the World Bank, through its orientation towards “putting people first” by working on the cultural variables of development programs (Cernea, 1991). Nowadays, the culture-and-development discourse (Loulanski, 2006) largely takes into account the specificity of places, communities, societies and cultures. Many concepts and approaches built within this paradigm can be identified in recent literature: culture-led development (Lysgård, 2016), cultural mapping (Jeanotte, 2016), arts-based development (Balfour, Fortunato, Alter, 2018), cultural resilience (Beel *et al.*, 2017), creative tourism (Marques, Borba, 2017), sustainable culture (Tsang, Siu, 2016) etc. Cultural resources are currently considered a guarantee of sustainable development (Jeanotte, 2016), a means of improving the quality of life (Markusen, Johnson, 2006) and a catalyst of community interaction processes that produce an “enhanced sense of community and greater well-being” (Balfour *et al.*, 2018:237).

Recent urban development is characterized by a sustained concern for the use of cultural resources. Many of the major cities of the world promote themselves both as residential areas and as cultural spaces (Lysgård, 2016). Although to a lesser extent than in urban areas, culture-led development strategies based on cultural heritage, tourism, cultural industries, and creativity have also begun to be applied in the rural area, but there is little research to reflect this trend (Balfour *et al.*, 2018). Anyway, cultural heritage represents an important generator for rural revitalization (Loulanski, 2006) and an important resource for cultural resilience (Beel *et al.*, 2017).

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) represents an important part of culture-based development policies and actions. According to the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* ratified in 2003, intangible cultural heritage consists of “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (UNESCO, 2018:5). This type of heritage, permanently recreated by communities as a resource of identity and continuity, consists of the following main categories: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing

arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship (id.). In 2012, The United Nations World Tourism Organization explicitly added *music* to the performing arts and introduced a distinct category of heritage: *gastronomy and culinary practices* (World Tourism Organization, 2012:4).

3. ONLINE COMMUNICATION AND DIGITALIZATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The “digital revolution” has generated important changes in the processes of culture’s production and consumption (Bertacchini, Segre, 2016). Many communities developed online descriptions of cultural assets or posted information on the local culture and history on Facebook pages (Jeannotte, 2016). Referring to creative tourism in urban development, Marques and Borba (2017) show that “many cities nowadays are struggling to reinvent themselves in a way that is meaningful for their citizens and, at the same time, attractive to tourists” (p. 86) and new digital technologies are used for this purpose. Thus, with the help of technology, elements of the intangible heritage can be highlighted; new, interactive contexts can be created, through which the tourist’s experience and also the connection of the inhabitants with their own community are improved.

Digitalizing cultural heritage on websites or social media represents a form of cultural resilience in contemporary communities. Digitalization is seen as a process through which cultural collections and local histories become more resilient in the future (Beel *et al.*, 2017). For example, building a dialogue with the diaspora and the development of genealogical tourism programs are opportunities for local communities, due to diaspora’s interest “in the finding of records to do with themselves of their family links” (Beel *et al.*, 2017:466). Thus, digital archives and Web 2.0 could represent an effective medium to develop relationships with the diaspora and / or to promote cultural heritage to attract tourists. In general, websites that promote tourist destinations represent the most important communication tool on the international tourism market and new strategies are being permanently developed, among which the websites are highly appealing for potential visitors (Wu, 2018).

There is also a fairly rich literature that highlights results of analyses performed on sites of different public or private institutions. All these studies used content analysis as research method (either a quantitative and / or a qualitative approach). For instance, websites of universities in Lithuania were analyzed in order to explore what types of online resources were used to present information about sustainable development (Katiliute, Daunoriene, 2015:866); websites belonging to public Romanian universities were analysed in order to „assess if they comply with the requirements of the new management model (Rădulescu *et al.*,

The interdisciplinary team of the project investigated all six dimensions of intangible cultural heritage presented above. Maps were drawn up for each of the communes, where resources of intangible cultural heritage of strategic interest were indicated; moreover, a network of thematic cultural routes was set up for Făgăraș Country.

5. METHODOLOGY

Our research method was content analysis, defined as a “careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material” (Lune, Berg, 2017:182) that “uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Weber, 1990:9). In using this methodology, our main objective was to examine what kinds of information about ICH had been posted on the official websites of town halls in Făgăraș Country and to which extent and under which form local administrations promote this type of cultural heritage to a local, national or even an international audience.

Between June 4 and 13, 2019, we consulted the official websites of all town halls in Făgăraș Country (the part belonging administratively to Brașov County). Our research approach was of the “directed approach” type. This approach was described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) and it has the role “to validate or extend conceptually theoretical framework or theory” (p. 1281). In our case, the theoretical framework was represented by the ICH categories defined by UNESCO and WTO. In interpreting our results, we also compared them with those obtained during the field research in the CarPaTO project, in which we identified the ICH resources within the studied communities.

In the first stage of our content analysis, we identified all the ICH-related pieces of information, posted on the official sites of town halls (both text and visual materials) and then we organized them by category. At this stage, we practically developed “a clear and detailed coding rubric” (Brancati, 2018:259). We initially coded the presence or absence of information about ICH. Furthermore, when the information was present on the site, we followed their type and location (their access path, starting from the home page). Where the information was absent, we investigated the presence / absence of the intention of having such information, showed by the presence or absence of buttons leading to towards cultural sections with no content or the type of information loaded in these sections. At the second stage, we selected only the websites that contained information about ICH and quantified the text or visual data according to an analysis model proposed by Brancati (2018). At the third stage, we discussed the findings based on both the theoretical framework (ICH categories) and the field research results gathered during the CarPaTO research project, in order to produce a coherent overview of how local administrations have communicated about their local ICH resources via their official websites.

6. FINDINGS

During the first stage of the research, we navigated the official websites of town halls to discover any information that corresponded to the ICH categories described above. The research technique was inductive.

We developed the coding rubric as we progressed in searching the ICH-related data on the websites, and we completed this step at the moment we reached theoretical saturation (see *Table 1. The coding rubric* below).

Table 1

The coding rubric.

| Commune | ICH-related information present | | | ICH-related information absent | |
|---------|---|--|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | At what section/button from the home page are they found? | At what sections/buttons of the page are they found? | What kind of data is presented? | Are there chapters/buttons designated to cultural information? | If so, what is their situation? |
| | | | Textual | | |
| | | | | | |

We found out that 12 out of the 16 official websites contained information about the areas's ICH resources. This was displayed in website pages named Traditions (most frequently), History, Events, and Culture. The access buttons for such information were on the page which contained a general presentation of the commune (in seven of the cases): on distinct sections „Commune and Tourism” (in two cases), under “Culture and Tourism” (in two other cases) or simply under “Tourism” (one case).

In the case of the four websites where ICH information was missing, there were buttons for sections such as Culture, Tourism (or Tourist Sites), even Heritage (in Drăguș), but these sections were empty or contained references to nature and tourism sites. We noted that no site had included a special section named ***Intangible cultural heritage***.

At the second stage of the research, we carried out a quantitative analysis based on the criteria of content analysis described by Brancati (2018): size, counts, location, and similarity. For each of these measures, we used one to three indicators (see *Table 2*). For *size*, *counts*, and *location* we used counting techniques, and for *similarity* we compared the design of the sites and the organization of information about ICH among themselves, in order to see whether there is some unitary structure or not.

Table 2

Measures and indicators of the content analysis.

| Measures | Indicators |
|----------------|--|
| M1. Size | I1.1 Number of words referring to intangible cultural heritage (length of text) I1.2 Number of distinct ICH resources mentioned on the site |
| M2. Counts | I2.1 Number of locations where information on ICH is loaded I2.2 Number of occurrences of the word “heritage” I2.3 Number of photographs related to ICH on the website |
| M3. Location | I3. Number of clicks to get to the information on ICH |
| M4. Similarity | I4.1 Number of sites that have a similar design I4.2 Maximum number of sites that contain references to the same type of ICH resource |

The quantitative data regarding indicators from I1.1 to I3 for each of the 12 communes that posted information about ICH on their sites as well as ICH categories (as defined by UNESCO and UNWTO) about which there was information on sites is presented in the table below (*Table 3*). We used the following abbreviations: (a) oral traditions and expressions – OTE; (b) performing arts and music – PAM; (c) social practices, rituals, and festive events – SPRE; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe – KNU; (e) traditional craftsmanship – TC; and (f) gastronomy and culinary practices – GCP.

Table 3

Values of content analysis for indicators I1.1–I3 and ICH categories.

| Running number | Community | I1.1 | I1.2 | I2.1 | I2.2 | I2.3 | I3 | ICH categories on which there is information on sites |
|----------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|----|---|
| 1 | Comăna | 647 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | SPRE |
| 2 | Hârşeni | 608 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 46 | 14 | PAM, SPRE, TC |
| 3 | Hoghiz | 190 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | SPRE |
| 4 | Lisa | 27 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 2 | SPRE, TC |
| 5 | Părău | 240 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | SPRE |
| 6 | Sâmbăta de Sus | 313 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | OTE, SPRE, TC, KNU |
| 7 | Şercaia | 3139 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 | OTE, PAM, SPRE, TC |
| 8 | Şinca | 452 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 | OTE; PAM, SPRE, TC |
| 9 | Şinca Nouă | 271 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 10 | PAM, SPRE, TC |
| 10 | Ucea | 19 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 31 | 3 | PAM, SPRE, TC |
| 11 | Viştea | 367 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | PAM, SPRE, TC |
| 12 | Voila | 239 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | SPRE |

Regarding the length of the texts referring to ICH (I1.1), the variation was from 19 to 3,139 words. At a top, the longest texts were on the sites of the communes Şercaia (3139), Comăna (647), and Hârşeni (608), and the shortest texts were found on the sites of the communes Hoghiz (190), Lisa (27), and Ucea (19).

In the case of the last two communes, it was a matter of a simple enumeration of heritage resources, which explains a lack of correlation between the length of ICH texts (I1.1) and the number of ICH resources mentioned (I1.2).

The figures below are screenshots of some ICH sections on the websites in Șercaia (Figure 2), Comăna (Figure 3) and Hârseni (Figure 4).

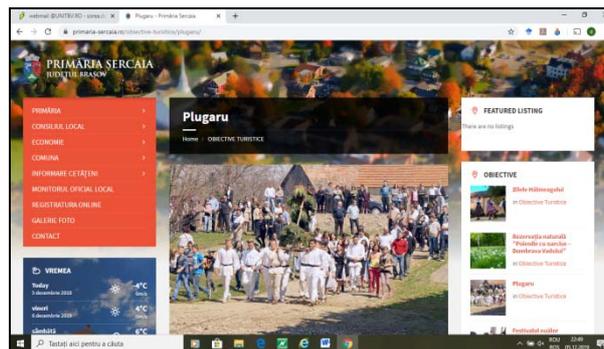


Figure 2. The Ploughman custom on the Șercaia commune website.

The Comăna website presents the Ploughman custom (Fig. 3, below) under the “Old traditions at Comăna” headline, accompanying the short article by a representative photograph.



Figure 3. The Ploughman custom on the Comăna commune website.

While on the Hârseni website, three different traditions are being briefly described on the same page, under the headline of “Folk traditions” (see Fig. 4).

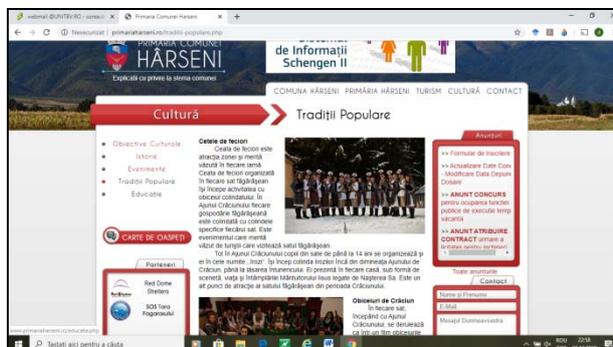


Figure 4. The group of lads on the Hârseni commune website.

The number of online locations in which there was information on ICH (I2.1) varied from 1 to 7. On average, the number of locations was 2.6. Information was found in a single location in four cases (Comăna, Părau, Viștea, and Voila) and in seven different locations in the case of a single commune (Hârseni). We found the word *heritage* (I2.2) only twice: in Hârseni and Șinca Nouă (in this latter case, as part of the name of a cultural project described on the site).

Regarding the visual data (I2.3), most websites contained photographs illustrating various forms of ICH, but without having systematic explanations / legends for each photograph. Three of the websites (Părau, Viștea, and Voila) had no photos, and the others had a number of photographs that varied from two (Comăna and Sâmbata de Sus) to 46 (Hârseni), with an average of nine photographs per website.

Accessing information on the websites we analysed was not difficult with regard to the number of clicks necessary, because with a maximum of two clicks, one could get to ICH-related contents. But users had to look up information intuitively, which is more difficult. In our analysis, we navigated to all the pages of the site to identify all information referring to ICH. Thus, we calculated the index I3 as a product between the minimum number of clicks to access information starting from the home page and the number of ICH locations on the site (minimum number of clicks x number of locations). There resulted a variation from 1 (1x1) as a minimum value (Comăna, Părau, and Voila) to 14 (2 x 7) in the case of Hârseni commune, with an average of 3.7 clicks.

As for the design similarity (I4.1), we noted that no website resembled the others. The value of the indicator I4.1, representing the number of websites with a similar design, was zero, which proved the existence of a wide heterogeneity regarding the online communication about ICH. Regarding the indicator I4.2, representing the maximum number of websites that contained references to the same type of ICH resource, its value was 12. All the twelve websites that contained ICH information had references to the *groups of lads*.

At the third stage of the research, we discussed our results from the perspective of both the theoretical framework and the results of our previous research in the CarPaTO project. We noted that the information displayed on the administrative websites covered unevenly the UNESCO and UNWTO fields of ICH. For instance, references to gastronomy and culinary practices (GCP) were completely missing. The best represented field of ICH was that of social practices, rituals, and festive events (SPRE). All the twelve websites that had information about ICH also displayed materials about winter holidays. In ascending order of frequency, these materials refer to *Aruncatul în strai* (that means throwing the lad in a blanket) and *Plugușorul* (Small Plough) on the New Year Day (practices meant to ensure the wealth of both households and individuals in the coming year), *Steaua* (the Star, carol sang by children that carry a decorated wooden star, heralding the Birth of Christ), *Herods* (group of carol-singing boys who perform a play on the theme of Herod's killing babies), and *the group of lads* (a group of carol singing young men). On the websites of the communes in the eastern extremity of Făgăraș Country (Hoghiz, Comăna, Părău, and Șercaia), the *Ploughman* is also mentioned (an agricultural spring custom, meant to ensure rich harvest in the coming year).

7. DISCUSSIONS

Textual and visual data referring to ICH that we identified and quantified in our research show the absence of a coherent strategy of local administrations from Făgăraș Country in their online communication about ICH via their official websites. If such a strategy existed, it could create “a kind of narrative” (Piñeiro-Naval, Serra, 2019) able to illustrate the cultural identity and the potential development of ICH resources in this area. Strategies are rather individualized and very local. Moreover, information posted on the official websites seem to have only an informing function related to local identity, without being placed in a wide, international context of the culture-development paradigm.

The lack of a unitary and coherent strategy was visible in the way the texts referring to ICH were conceived, with the remark, once again, that the term as such has not appeared at all on the websites we studied. The length of the texts is often considered, in content analysis, a measure of the importance assigned to them (Brancati, 2018). In our case, we found out that some websites were rich in information, others had only little information, while others, none at all. In general, information was descriptive. In most cases, local customs were named and described like in an ethnography or folklore textbook, without emphasizing the quality of cultural resources for local development, except for a few emphases on the fact that they represent elements of local identity and pride.

The visual material was also very heterogeneous. Some websites (Viştea, for example), although they had many textual information about ICH, had no photographs to illustrate the written material. Other websites contained many photographs placed in several locations (Hârseni); in the other cases, photographs were placed in a single location, but further explanation were missing (Ucea).

The existence of a wide heterogeneity of strategies in promoting the local ICH was also proved by the absence of any similarity concerning the design of websites sites and the way in which information was organized. In order to clarify this aspect, we asked a representative from the County Council of Braşov and found out that the options for the websites design belonged to town halls; the local administrations make decisions about the quantity and quality of information posted on their websites.

The field research and the analysis of documents that we carried out in the CarPaTO project revealed the abundance of ICH resources in Făgăraş Land. This abundance does not seem to be presented and promoted well enough on the official websites of the town halls. The information posted on the websites was not organized following UNESCO and UNWTO categories of ICH, with the exception of the Şinca Nouă commune, where a previous cultural project was implemented (*Şinca Community – cultural identity* financed by the Vivid Heritage programme (<http://www.repf.ro/programok.php?id=11>). Thus, on the website of this commune, information about ICH was organized in a closer way to the ICH definition and categories. We also found out, during the field research, that the mayor of this commune was very interested in preserving and capitalizing on the local cultural resources. This was the case of other two websites (Viştea and Hârseni) which contained rich information about ICH. The mayors and / or deputy-mayors from these communes were also very interested in supporting local cultural heritage. During the interviews we conducted in the CarPaTO project, these local leaders proved to be enthusiastic and skilful interlocutors on the subject of ICH local resources. Indeed, in the cases of the communes where local authorities declared they interested in the field, the ICH information on the websites was closer to UNESCO and UNWTO definition. The validation of this conjecture is anyway a subject for future research.

According to our analysis, none of the official websites of town halls in Făgăraş Country contained a special section entitled *Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which could suggest a local ignorance of the importance of this concept in contemporary cultural and development policies at international level. The scarcity (almost absence) of the term *heritage* on the administrative websites (it appeared only twice in all texts that we analysed) strengthens this supposition. In addition, information was fairly scattered on the websites. Only in four cases it could be found in a single place, for the rest, several links needed to be accessed to get a wider picture of what the local ICH are.

But this is not only a matter of taxonomies. The way in which information was presented could indicate a weak crediting or even the ignorance of the potential of ICH resources for the local identity and for the community cohesion. In most of the cases, information about ICH seemed to be presented only with a tourist focus. It was formulated for users who did not know the local cultural heritage, having rather a message of the type “Look how interesting we are and how many spectacular things we can show you”. In such cases, customs and folk costumes were broadly described; they were addressed to the others, not to the inhabitants of the commune.

The promotion of the local tourist potential is an excellent idea from an economic point of view. As shown in recent literature, cultural resources can significantly contribute to sustainable development (Jeanotte, 2016) and can increase the quality of life (Markusen, Johnson, 2006), but they represent first of all a catalyst of the interaction processes among the community members, having as a result a stronger sense of community and well-being (Balfour *et al*, 2018; Shipley, Snyder, 2013). In other words, the main function of ICH is that of supporting community identity. Only by fulfilling this function, ICH resources become authentic tourist resources. In line with such ideas, we consider that ICH information on administrative websites could be organized to achieve both these goals. From this perspective, a town hall website that reveals the expressions of community life is more efficient than one focused on mere tourist attractions. Thus, only after a clear taxonomical separation of ICH resources, an integrated approach of community interests becomes possible. We also believe that a program designed to raise awareness and train local leaders for cultural-based projects would be a good investment from both an economic and a social point of view, in this geographic and ethnographic area.

Online communication and digitalization of ICH resources is a very useful method to promote local and regional culture, because the Internet certainly represents an essential tool to attract tourists (Piñeiro-Naval, Serra, 2019), and also to increase the potential of an area in attracting external investors and producing economic development (Şandru, 2013). According to Piñeiro-Naval and Serra (2019), “towns and cities use their websites to project a cultural and tourist image” (p. 4) in an attractive and convincing manner, and in the case of Portugal, the main resource of cultural heritage promoted on the sites of municipalities is gastronomy. In our case, we have not found any reference to gastronomy on the analysed websites, although in the CarPaTO project we discovered numerous valuable resources that belong to this dimension of the intangible cultural heritage (e.g. traditional recipes that are still used in local cuisine and are capitalized within various community events).

The field research in the CarPaTO project highlighted an abundance of ICH resources in Drăguş, a community that has preserved or revived numerous ancient cultural customs. Paradoxically, the town hall in Drăguş was among the four

communes without an active ICH section on its official website. Conversely, the commune has an active Facebook page. The communication regarding events of community interest (including those related to cultural heritage) moved to social media environment, which could represent an interesting option in communicating information about ICH for both internal and external audience. Three of the four communes without active ICH pages on their administrative websites had, instead, active Facebook pages (Beclean, Drăguș, and Mândra). Another five communes with ICH information on their websites also had a Facebook page. We did not research the impact of using Facebook in this context, but it represents for us a question for future research.

CONCLUSIONS

Online communication about ICH on the official websites of town halls in Făgăraș Country seems to be a concern for the most local administrations. But our analysis has shown that there were also official, administrative websites without any information about ICH. In most of the communes, where such data existed, their online communication had no coherent strategy and seemed not to be produced following a common concept aimed at promoting the cultural identity of this area. Our content analysis has highlighted a great heterogeneity in presenting and promoting ICH resources in the online communication of local administrations via websites, together with some evidence of a poor knowledge of international policies regarding the preservation and promotion of this type of heritage.

Comparing the online data from such administrative websites with those gathered during our field research in which we inventoried the local ICH resources, we found out that there was an insufficient capitalization of such real resources in the online environment and also a stronger orientation of the message towards external audience (potentially tourists) than towards community members, in relation to whom ICH can play an important role in strengthening local identities and producing community development.

Thus, our main conclusion is that the online communication of local administrations about ICH via official websites in Făgăraș Country is much weaker compared to the wealth of local resources that could have a huge potential for both capitalization and community development. In discussing our results, we argue that online communication about local cultural heritage resources could have a double orientation, both internal and external, with the purpose of both strengthening local identities and solidarity, and attracting economic resources meant to lead to a sustainable development of the area.

Finally, we formulated the hypothesis of a possible shift in the online communication about local cultural resources, from official websites towards social media, which could be a future theme of interest for our research on ICH resources in Romania, but also for possible comparative research at international level.

In this field, our research is the first to approach a unitary ethnographic area in Romania, and we consider our contribution is twofold: on the one hand, it highlights the absence of a coherent strategy of promoting ICH by online communication in an ethnographic area which has a great cultural potential; on the other hand, we bring a methodological contribution under the form of a content analysis based on the directed approach, which can be used in other studies with a similar focus.

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